



# Reinforcing Agency

*A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ACHIEVING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE WEST WARD*

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# **Meet the Team**

## ***Meet the Team:***



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## **The Lafayette College Technology Clinic:**

“Technology Clinic is a two-semester program in which teams of students from each academic division work together on imaginative solutions to real-world problems for clients.

The students are nominated by professors and former Tech Clinic students and mentored by two faculty facilitators. Project teams are purposely multidisciplinary and include students and faculty mentors from the Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences and Engineering. To encourage “out-of-the-box” thinking we have no requirements for prior experience, thus reducing incoming “prejudices” in order to encourage innovative solutions.”

## **Acknowledgments:**





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# **Preamble**

## *Preamble:*

This report is a compilation of our work this past semester and builds on the ideas we presented in the first semester of our project. The objective of this project is to make connections and gather data to inform the efforts of the Lafayette College Technology Clinic for the next four years. This long-term project will focus on strengthening cooperative and individual agency among residents and encouraging collaboration with stakeholders.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Greater Easton Development Partnership and helping with the implementation of their West Ward Neighborhood Plan. This report will outline possible objectives for the next four years based on research done over the past year. Centrally, our focus is the challenge of encouraging civic engagement and community participation. We want to compliment the efforts of the GEDP, as outlined in their plan, by taking a human-centric approach with the West Ward community at the forefront of change.

# Our Charge

## *Our Charge:*

This Technology Clinic's charge is different from past projects. We were tasked with gathering data that can be used to set up a plan and establish a foundation for a four-year relationship between the Lafayette College Technology Clinic and the West Ward Community. To do this, we have assumed a human-centric approach to economic empowerment. The economic development of the West Ward will potentially be more successful if the community members are central to proposed and actual change since they are the critical stakeholders. Therefore, all potential changes to the West Ward are best implemented with community collaboration.

In our first semester, we aimed to develop a better understanding of the West Ward community by immersing our team members intensively with community members. We explored the various assets of the West Ward and researched potential projects. We soon concluded that this approach was not meeting our original goals or our commitment to strengthening community voice and agency. During our second semester, we set out to build dialogue between community members and to establish a sustainable and comprehensive plan.

Our work should help inform the next four years of Technology Clinic efforts within the West Ward. While we have developed an inclusive paradigm, we recognize that the West Ward community is dynamic. We anticipate that the subsequent projects will benefit from our efforts but may also find different approaches that benefit the West Ward community.



# **Previous Work**

## *Previous Work:*

The work we completed prior to this semester mainly entailed the construction of our paradigm and the perfection of our methodology. We focused our attention on the following objectives:

- 1. Defining the project significance:** We began our portion of the project by exploring the significance of the project at-hand. In order to comprehend its importance, we were tasked with identifying who the potential beneficiaries are based on data we collected.
- 2. Constructing and perfecting our paradigm:** The entirety of our project relies on the detailed, specific paradigm we created during the first semester of our work. Without the presence of our paradigm, our project and the subsequent years would not share cohesive fundamental beliefs about how economic empowerment should be approached and achieved.
- 3. Positioning our project in conjunction with the GEDP's project:** For maximum efficiency, we ensured that our project would run complementary to the GEDP's project instead of oppositional to it. In combining our separate approaches, we hoped to maximize the benefits and sustainability of our efforts within the West Ward.

4. **Conducting qualitative and quantitative research:** By spending time both in and out of the West Ward, we utilized various research strategies to gather a deeper understanding of the area. We researched demographics of the West Ward, made observations at restaurants, and had conversations with residents. Through our close communication, we have sustained a network of relationships that will be useful in future years of our project.
5. **Mapping the area assets:** Through conversations with residents and data gathered, we began to document assets within the West Ward that were worth exploring further.
6. **Locating opportunities for engagement:** In order to help guide the direction of the project in the future, we put together a comprehensive list of opportunities for engagement. We utilized data on the area and what we heard in conversations we had with residents to generate the opportunities.

## *Asset Mapping*

Asset mapping is a core tenet of our approach which has served to inform our plan and strengthen our ability for community development. Asset-based community development involves a methodology for sustainable community as described in our Spring 2019 report.

Asset-based community development focuses on emphasizing the members as participants in their own development, expanding citizen's voices especially where apathy is prevalent, and galvanizing members of the community around issues they care about. One tool used is a circle of influence expansion model, wherein the focus begins with the talents and skills of individuals and moves out to how these individuals impact each other in larger institutions.<sup>1</sup>

The key difference in asset mapping to other modes of development is the omission of needs mapping, which places a focus on perceived negative components of a community. Many of the residents we've talked to inside the West Ward have expressed concerns for what they perceive as problems in the West Ward. Instead of naming deficits within the West Ward, we have strived to first analyze the strengths of the community by identifying resources within the community.

## Summer Work

Rachel, Luisa, and Aidan stayed in Easton during the summer to continue work with the Technology Clinic as Gladstone Whitman '49 Summer Fellows. Over the summer, we invested our time arranging meetings with community members and spending time in the West Ward. We were able to develop a deeper understanding of the West Ward community through the close relationships we formed with residents and through attending the Vegetables in Community stand weekly. The following points encompass the themes that evolved throughout our work in the summer:

1. We quickly realized that we were not speaking to all segments of the population, specifically renters. It was easy to see why: those who own property felt like they had more of a stake in the physical and mental upkeep of their neighborhood and thus made themselves more eagerly available to us. These voices were also valuable in our scholarship, but not to the exclusion of the transient population, especially because many deficits addressed to us by community members are traced to circumstances surrounding this transient population. **In short, coming out of the summer, it was essential we talked to as many renters as possible to hear the previously unheard and merge the interests of this group with other groups in the community.**



2. We encountered divergent interests, and we worked to understand the conflicting needs of community members that we spoke with. We sought instead to find commonalities within the community. Nodal points are people or institutions within the community which are linked to other people or institutions in the community at an above average rate. Particularly important in exploring this path was the geography of the West Ward. Many residents place significance upon where you live within the West Ward. This geographical property of the West Ward can be utilized to turn divisions into commonality among those who would otherwise have none. **In short, we needed to identify individuals possessing the connections to galvanize subsections of the population not typically associated together.**
  
3. The conversations we had with residents reflected a division between the north side of Northampton Street and the south side of Northampton Street. Some reasons behind this division include:
  - a. the perception of crime
  - b. primarily homeownership versus renting
  - c. the proximity to the prison
  
4. A topic that we discussed intensely was how to plan meetings effectively. We were unsure whether we should start with small or large groups, organize meetings based on group similarities, or separate the meetings by geographic location. These are questions that followed us into the semester and caused us to reevaluate our strategy. We occupy a unique position within the West Ward. We do not live in the West Ward, represent an

economic interest, or possess any ulterior motive for being in the West Ward. We only work to further its development. **Using this position, we realized we could facilitate community dialogue within shared spaces and hopefully bring together community members in the same room to start the conversation.**

5. A skill that we practiced over the summer was reading between the lines of what residents said in our conversations. In order to fully understand what residents conveyed, we actively sought to listen carefully to their unprompted responses.
6. We made it a priority to increase our scholarship efforts in the coming semester.

## **Coming out of the Summer:**

Our goals for this semester were to identify how to help the moral institution of Lafayette College influence the instrumental institution of the GEDP, to build a network of relationships with people within the West Ward, such that it could be transferred to the next West Ward Technology Clinic team, and consider which focus areas the next team could work on. Some of the focus areas we worked on during the summer were community bonding and organization, housing (as a source of transiency, particularly within the renting community), healthcare (drug rehabilitation, nutrition, and overall access), and neighborhood beautification. As always, our broader philosophical focus was on hearing the voice of the community and a bottom-up development strategy.

# **Current Semester's**

# **Work**

## *Community Meetings*

To consolidate our efforts over the course of the year, we held a series of community meetings in the middle of our second semester at the Easton Area Community Center.

- \* We advertised for the event with flyers written in both English and Spanish.
- \* We reached out to multiple neighborhood leaders for help organizing groups of community stakeholders.
- \* We planned to hold discussions about the future of the West Ward.
- \* We also provided childcare for parents who attended the event.

We utilized local catering services to supply food for the evening:

- Faouzi's Talk of the Town
- 1001 Thai
- Easton Taco
- Daddy's Place
- Porter's Pub (order canceled when 3rd meeting canceled)

**RESULT: Unfortunately, we had to cancel the third meeting due to low attendance at the first two meetings. The first meeting only attracted two neighborhood leaders and the second meeting only attracted one neighborhood leader.**




## **LESSONS:**

- 1. There was a lack of proper advertisement on our part**
- 2. There was a lack of community desire to discuss neighborhood topics.**

## **TAKEAWAYS:**


1. Identify additional neighborhood leaders who could act as anchors and motivators.
2. Encourage the involvement of other stakeholders in the community.
  - a. Business owners
  - b. People who have made long-term investments
  - c. People with family roots there
3. Anchor locations need to be better utilized.
  - a. Churches
  - b. Paxinosa Elementary School
  - c. Easton Area Community Center
4. People are “tired of talk” – most current residents are tired of contributing to community discussions and then seeing no progress in their ideas and wants and needs. People are excited to see a “win” within the community that the residents were directly involved in.
5. Once people get talking, common interests can be better established.

## Community Meeting Flyers:

 **WEST WARD**

**Neighborhood Discussions** 

*FREE* Food Provided at



Come discuss the future of our neighborhood  
with our neighbors!

Babysitting provided!

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 24, & 28 - 7:30-9:00PM

 **WEST WARD**

**Discusión de Barrio** 

*Comida GRITAS*  
Proporcionada en



¡Ven a discutir el futuro de nuestro  
vecindario con nuestros vecinos!

¡Niñera allí!

FECHA: 24 de OCTUBRE, 24, 28 - 7:30-9:00PM

## ***Building relationships with the GEDP***

Without well-defined relationships with the community residents and the Greater Easton Development Partnership, the next four years of our project will be more difficult. Combining our human-centric approach toward reinforcing agency within the West Ward with the GEDP's, we plan to work collaboratively so that we can integrate our efforts toward improving the sense of community within the West Ward.

## ***Changing Our Approach***

Our previous semester's work was based on developing a fundamental understanding of the community. When our Tech Clinic team first began imagining everything that was possible in the West Ward, we looked at needs and wants to address the issues in the community. However, coming out of the semester, we changed our approach from project-centered to empowerment focused. Through countless meetings and many efforts in engaging the West Ward, we developed a strong sense of the community that makes up the area and made it our key philosophy to build from the community's strengths through voice and agency.

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# **Moving Forward**

## **Four-year Plan: Block by Block**

Our Technology Clinic project was the beginning of a five-year plan to engage with the West Ward community. We set out to define a potential approach for future engagement through research, paradigm and network building, and planning. Our year of research illustrated the complexity, diversity, and immensity of the West Ward, both specially and substantively. This understanding of the West Ward has led us to abandon our project-oriented approach. Instead, we have turned to a small-scale method. We propose a block-by-block approach to development with the intention that a micro-level approach can spillover and build each year. The block approach is designed to start on a small-scale and expand outwards. For the purposes of this project we have isolated one large block in the West Ward. The next step will be to home in on that chosen block and work outwards. This section will explain the goals and criterion before analyzing the chosen block.

## Goals:

There are a few goals that we have isolated as key to the blocks program recognizing that the ultimate goal is neighborhood stability and community empowerment and ownership, which can be increased by meeting the following goals:

**1. Decreasing Transiency:** one of difficult issues within of the West Ward from an academic standpoint, is the high rate of transiency. Transiency here is defined as a year or less duration of stay in the West Ward. Transiency in the West Ward is driven by both factors unique to Easton and global trends:

### **Factors Contributing to and Driving Transiency in the West Ward:**

**Job instability:** Cities have decreasingly become center of economic empowerment or stability. Easton like other cities is vulnerable to a volatile job market. Recent data from the Bureau of Labor indicates people change their job every 4 years.<sup>2</sup>

**Regional migration cycle:** Driven by many of the factors noted here, there is a cycle of migration that is evident from an analysis of the general transience of the areas around Easton. People immigrating into and emigrating from Easton seem to be coming from not just the greater Lehigh valley, but from New Jersey and New York as well. From there they tend to migrate around the Lehigh Valley and surrounding areas in a cycle, in search for work and stability.

**Housing prices:** Generally, housing prices are a major barrier to neighborhood stability. Neighborhoods like the West Ward easily can price out poorer residents leading to problematic housing situations, such as a large density of rentals, absentee land lords, and unlivable conditions. This issue often is compounded by low incomes that bar residents from other housing options.<sup>3</sup>

**Safety and Security:** Many people we have interacted with over the past year have cited safety as a key factor in their decision to stay or leave the West Ward. Whether a city is objectively safe or not, resident perspective drives people's decisions to buy a home or raise their family in the West Ward.<sup>4</sup>

**Norms of homeownership:** Across America a new trend shows a decrease in home ownership. As a result, a new rental culture has countered the norm that home ownership is a necessary perquisite to middle class status.<sup>5</sup> While stable and safe housing combined with a healthy community is still a fundamental need, home ownership is not.

**The mid-sized city dilemma:** This dilemma can be described as the perception that mid-sized cities are a stepping block for greater opportunity and are used as transitional spaces towards a larger city. However, large cities are showing greater disparities among their wealthier and poor populations; they no longer foster economic mobility.<sup>6</sup> Middle sized cities like Easton, are positioned to be the new centers of economic mobility and less steppingstone cities.<sup>7</sup>

**2. Community building:** By starting with a small neighborhood, community ownership and bonding can be facilitated from a microlevel, building outward to more neighborhoods. As each team builds upon previous work, connectivity across neighborhoods and a support network can be fostered. The ultimate goal is neighborhood empowerment.

**3. Access to Amenities:** Whether a corner store or a community garden, every community is unique and requires a set of facilities and services that can benefit the community's specific needs. Amenities can be defined as useful features and facilities that are critical to community wellbeing. Parks are an important asset of the West Ward and an amenity that can be leveraged.

**4. Avoiding Gentrification:** Sustainable economic development cannot displace the current population. The stability of the neighborhood should rely on incentivizing current residents to stay in the community and invest in its future. All projects and initiatives require community feedback and community driven implementation.

**5. Safety:** Safety in this context refers both to physical comfort, as well as security in one's position. The West Ward is often seen as a dangerous space due to the perception of crime. While this characterization has merit in some pockets of the neighborhood, it is ultimately, a barrier to stability and community collaboration. Incentivizing community involvement can assuage both physical and perceived sense of safety.



## Methodology

To define blocks which meet the set goals, several criteria were chosen as parameters. The criterion are latent assets of the community which can be used to define relevant features of the area that should be documented.

**1. Anchors:** In order to unify the community and facilitate bonding and ownership

- \* **Institutions:** Center in the community which communities are united by or rally in support of. The “third places” of the neighborhood, such as churches, restaurants, and corner stores.<sup>6</sup> Institutions are also helpful to sponsor neighborhood activities and act as centers of support.
- \* **Leaders:** Not only people who are active but are able to bring their neighbors together. They take on responsibility and ownership already and can help others do the same.



**Easton Area Community Center (EACC)**  
901 Washington St.



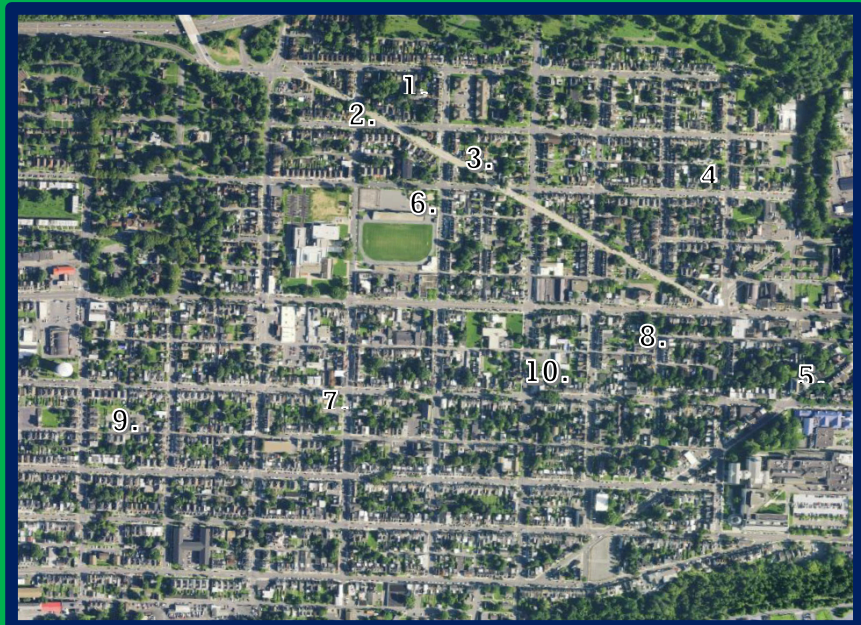
**St. Anthony's Church**  
900 Washington St.

**2. Green Spaces:** Parks, community gardens, and pocket parks are all examples of important spaces in cities, not only for health but for community building.

Green spaces are especially important for the Technology Clinic since there is already a successful Veggie Stand program in the West Ward facilitated by Lafayette College. Urban gardens are an important asset that can be used to increase neighborhood ownership and access to nutritional foods. The green spaces would be the optimal unifying factor which could connect the different blocks.

### Green Spaces in the West Ward:

1. Jackson Street Parks
2. Cannon Park
3. Bushkill Street Park
4. 7<sup>th</sup> Street Park
5. Dutchtown/Walnut Street Park
6. Vanderveer Park
7. Centennial Park
8. 8<sup>th</sup> Street Pocket Park
9. Raspberry and



### 3. Demographics: Including age, ethnicity, and population density are key characteristics of the population.

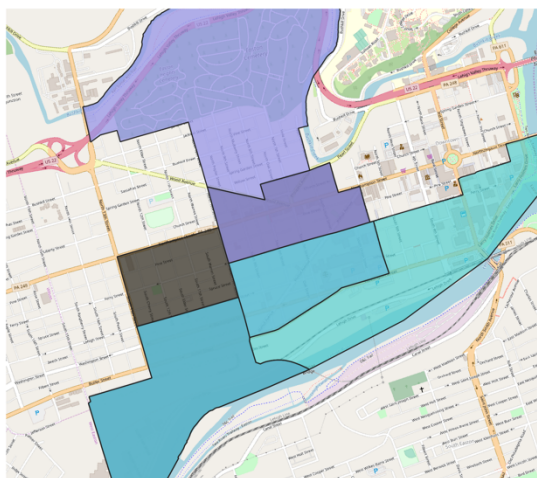
**Age:** The Population of the West Ward

**Ethnicity:** Mainly considering the groups which identify as White, African American or Black, and Hispanic or Latino. (See Map 1.)

**Population:** Measured here in density persons per square mile. The population density of the West Ward is higher compared to College Hill and Downtown. The population density for the West Ward from American Community Survey census tract estimates from 2013-2017 are around 9,000 to 12,000 persons per square mile. Population density is notably lower on the north side of Northampton Street.

**Map 1.**

#### Demographics of the West Ward 2013-2017



Demographics by Category

- White
- African American and Black
- Hispanic and Latino

The West Ward is very ethnically diverse. The areas which are less opaque illustrate where the different racial block groups overlap.

American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2013-2017. Background: OpenStreet Maps.

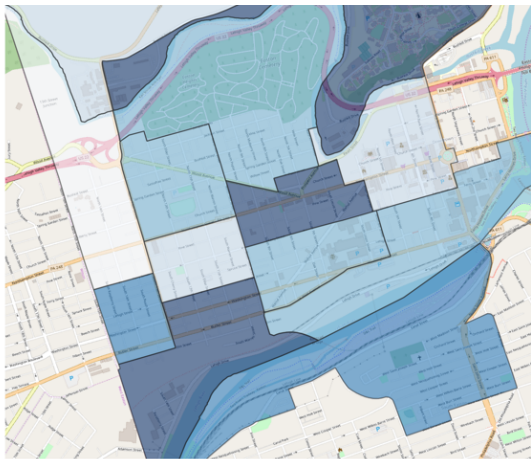
**4. Housing:** Data surrounding housing is the main indicator of transience in the West Ward. Among these factors are determining the amount of rentals compared to land owners, the duration of time spent in the area, and the occupancy density.

**Rentals v. Owned homes:** Renter culture is very prominent and a main factor contributing to population migration in the area. The number of rentals is high compared to the amount of owned single-family homes in the West Ward. This was measured from mapping occupancy units. Area with more units per residence are rentals. (See Map 2.)

**Duration of Stay:** This data measures the tenure by the year the householder moved into the unit. This data shows the amount of renters which moved in after 2015. (See Map 3.)

**Map 2.**

### Number of Two Unit Residences Per Structure



The South Side of the West Ward has more residences with multiple units within a single structure. The darker blue areas have more residences with 2 units. Notably, in the area from 15th Street to 13th Street and the area around Butler Street, which can indicate rental units.

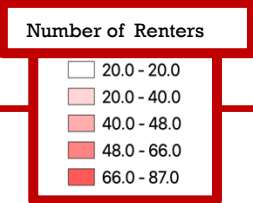
Number of Two Unit Structures

- 0 - 0
- 0 - 35
- 35 - 65
- 65 - 96
- 96 - 119

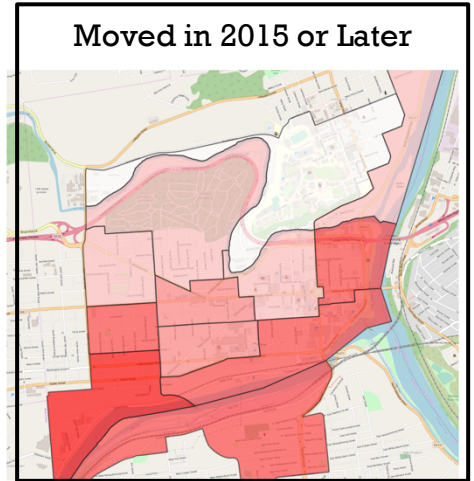
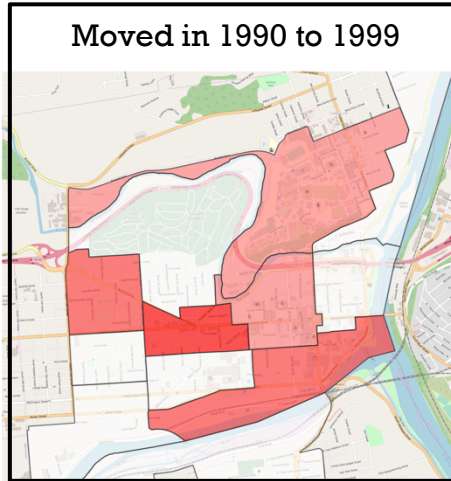


**Map 3.**

The darker red blocks indicate more renters who have moved in during the given time period. As of 2017 more renters had only been in their homes since 2015 or later. This indicates that the West Ward has few residents who have been in their homes for longer durations. The South Side of the West Ward, especially in the blocks around Butler Street, show the highest number of persons moving in recently.

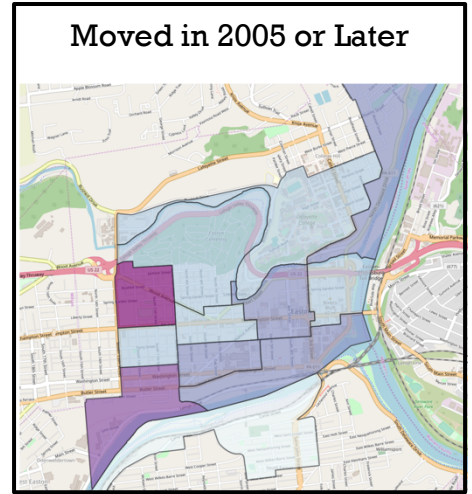
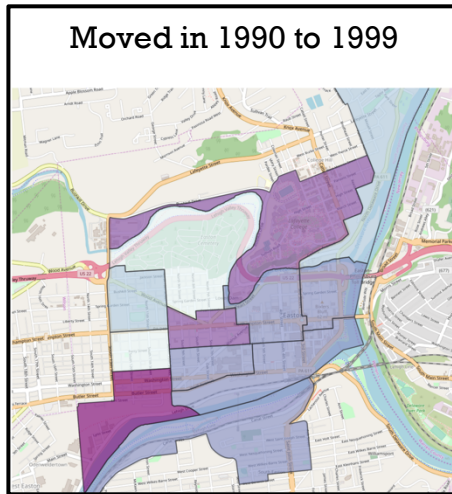
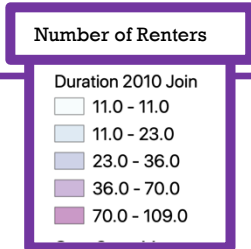


**Renter Tenure as of 2013-2017**



**Renter Tenure as of 2005-2010**

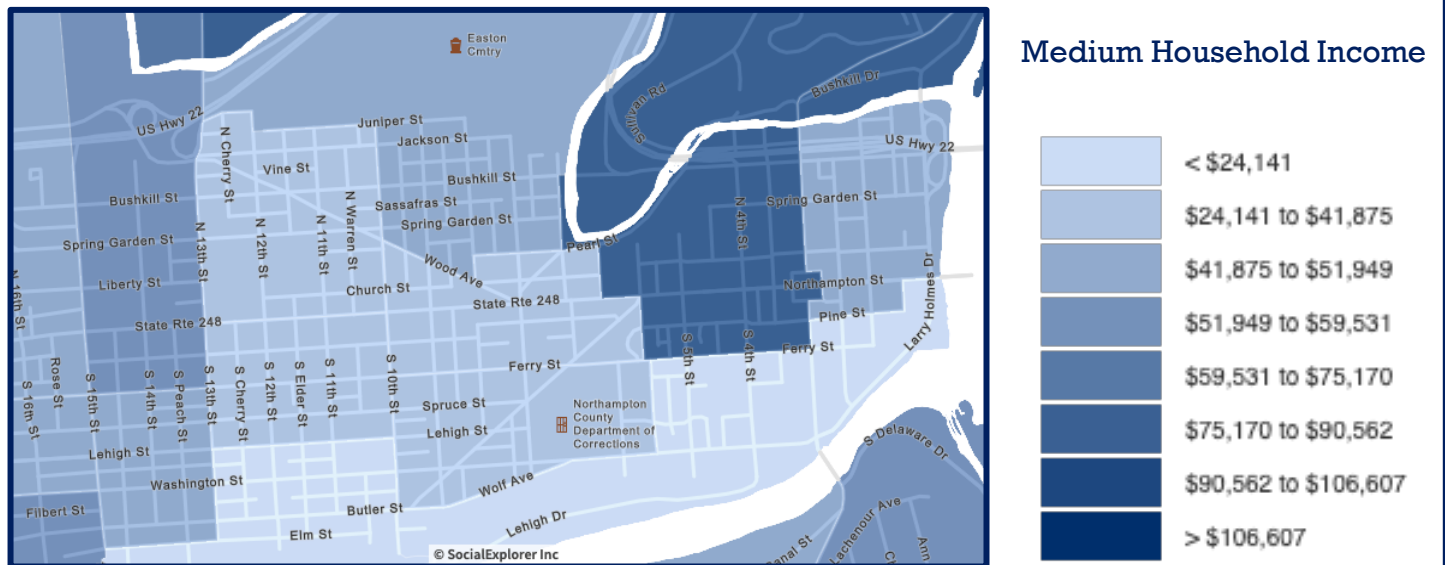
This pattern is even more accentuated when older maps are viewed. In 2010 the number of renters across the city appears lower compared to 2017. The data also appears steadier across time periods, which might suggest less transiency before 2019.



American Communities Survey Five Year Estimates, 2005-2010 & 2013-2017; Background: OpenStreetMaps.

**5. Income:** Income distribution in the West Ward is much lower compared to the rest of Easton. However, within the West Ward there are more divisions. Within the West Ward the regions south of Northampton Street have a much lower income than the north side.

**Map 4. Income Distribution of the West Ward**



**6. Business Corridors:** Can be defined as areas where there are more businesses than residences in proximity to one another. These corridors can also be the absence of business in a location where there is an empty lot. Major business corridors in the West Ward include:

Northampton Street  
Butler Street  
Thirteenth Street

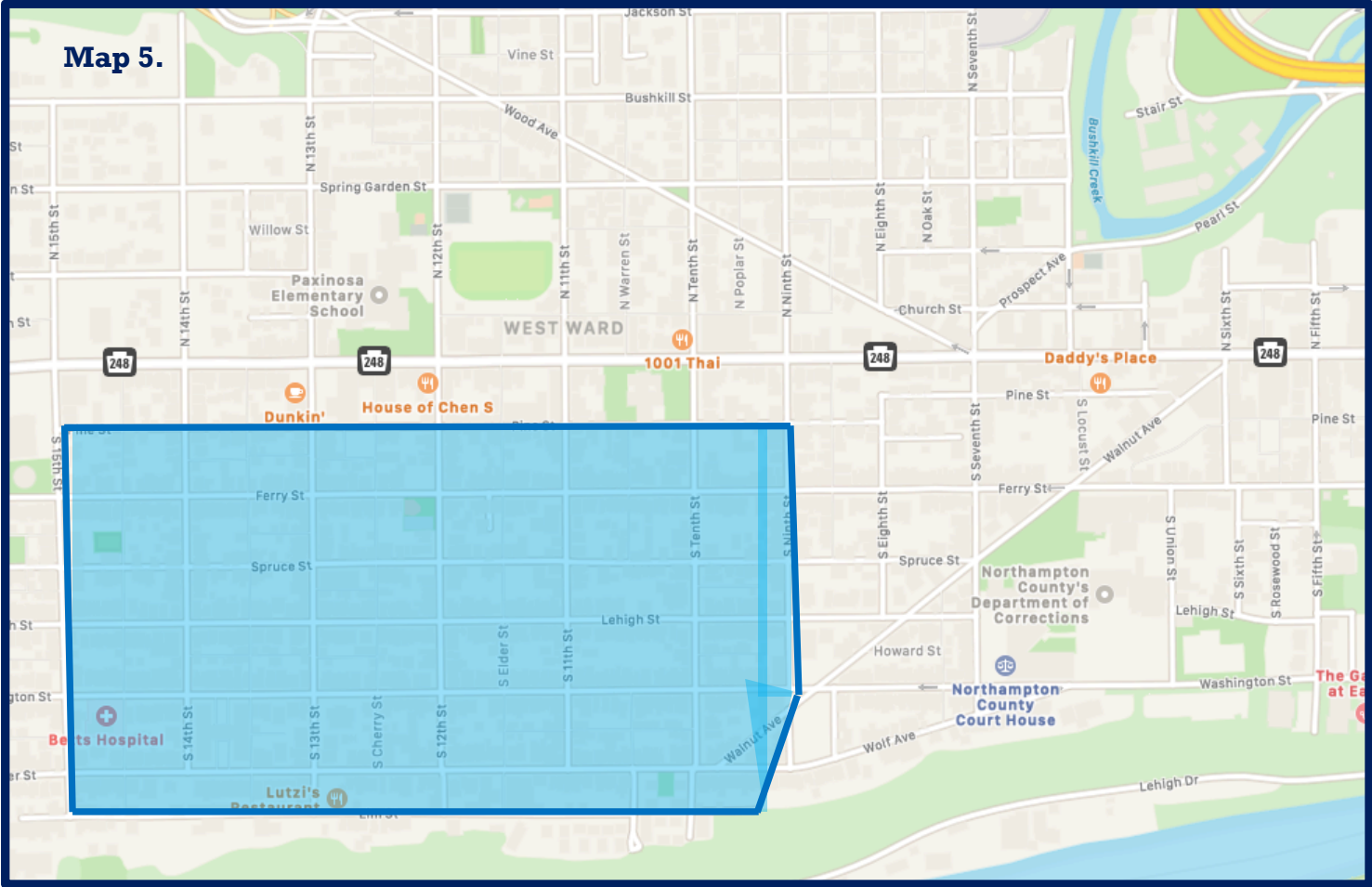
**7. Spatial Features:** Features which are ancillary to the main assets of the community, but dictate how land is and could be used.

- **Zoning:** The bylaws and guidelines which dictate the potential use of parcels and land plots in a given area. This is important for development projects.
- **Topography:** The elevation of the area above and below sea level. This feature is important to determining walkability and energy to move from one place to another. The West Ward is split between hilly and flat terrain.

# Chosen Blocks and Reasoning:

As stated above, the block approach is intended to provoke a “spillover effect” within the West Ward. After blending the criterion with our prescribed goals, we have been able to identify key blocks within the West Ward to begin this approach with.

Based off the criteria the South Side of Northampton Street longitudinally from Pine Street down to Elm Street and latitudinally from 9<sup>th</sup> street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street is where the approach should begin:





**1. Residential:** The south side of Northampton Street is densely populated and mostly residential with a high percentage of rentals.

Why is this Important?	Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly residential areas are the most transient and the least stable</li> <li>• In order to increase community ownership and bonding, the most transient neighborhoods must be addressed</li> <li>• Residential areas are full of people who can help to build community ownership and lead their neighborhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly residential areas are dense and diverse</li> <li>• It will be difficult to inspire buy-in from renters who tend to stay in Easton for short durations</li> <li>• Absentee landlords can be a barrier to tenant agency and disempower community development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting transition zones where transient areas become more stable and saturated with landowners can aid community buy-in and create spillover.</li> <li>• Rather than trying to prevent rental culture, moving with the trend and improving the lives of tenants</li> <li>• Engage with renters to incentivize them to invest in the community</li> </ul>

**2. Business corridors:** Butler Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street attract an assortment of businesses, ranging anywhere from restaurants to convenience stores. There is a high availability of spaces for entrepreneurial purposes within this block.

Why is this Important?	Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulating sustainable business development enriches the community and offers more opportunity for residents to stay in the community</li> <li>• Businesses serve as centers of community engagement and community dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses in the West Ward go out of business very quickly</li> <li>• Businesses that bring in more jobs that hire locally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting community events at local businesses and including them in the processes and projects</li> <li>• The West Ward is full of empty commercial spaces that have the potential to become new businesses</li> </ul>

**3. Continuity:** Effectively approaching economic development from a block approach requires unique links which connect the different areas of the West Ward and bring people together from different neighborhoods. Within this block, and across the West Ward, green spaces are a common attribute. The Technology Clinic has built a relationship with Vegetables in the Community, a produce stand which takes place at the 10<sup>th</sup> and Pine Street Community Garden during the summer. Using these spaces as a conduit for community bonding and as an anchor is critical.

Why is this important?	Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity across blocks and the community serve to bring disparate groups in the West Ward together and inspire collaborative development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspiring use of parks and green spaces</li> <li>• Increasing community awareness of park programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Technology Clinic will collaborate with the GEDP to implement and engage the community in making improvements to the Raspberry Street Park during the Spring of 2020</li> </ul>

**4. Anchor Institutions:** The Easton Area Community Center serves as a pivotal location for community bonding and organization to occur. The community center provides residents and their children with a space to connect informally through after-school clubs. St. Anthony's and other centers of religious worship are located in this area and pull in their own unique subsets of the community.

Why is this important?	Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anchor institutions are community centers which already bring people together</li> <li>• These institutions are already driving community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The "third place" in America is starting to vanish, finding these centers is becoming more challenging<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building up new centers where communities members can come together for community dialogue</li> <li>• Leveraging the unique connections to green spaces</li> </ul>

**5. Community Leaders:** There are multiple active community leaders that reside in and around the chosen block area as well as other residents who have the potential to lead the community. Organization and active engagement can bring new and current leaders towards empowering their neighborhoods.

Why is this important?	Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community leaders can be the drivers of community development</li><li>• They know their neighbors and can stir their community to action</li><li>• Inspiring community leaders to become block leaders</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding community members who are willing and have the time to take on more responsibility</li><li>• Unifying block leaders in a network</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with the GEDP to set guidelines and provide resources to block leaders</li><li>• Formulating innovative methods of inspiring collaboration</li></ul>

## **Future Collaborations with the GEDP**

**Beginning the next semester, the Tech Clinic plans to collaborate with some of the initiatives that the GEDP has prioritized within our designated block area in the West Ward. The specific projects that Tech Clinic will focus on collaborating with the GEDP in the next semester of work will potentially include the following:**

### **1. Raspberry Park**

Encouraging resident-driven efforts in the revamping of the park and its potential amenities

### **2. Block Anchors**

Identifying Block Anchors/Captains and creating a set of guidelines that they can use as a launchpad for community engagement within their blocks

### **3. Community Events**

Collaborating on the creation of community events that involve invested block captains

### **4. GEDP's Newsletter**

Contributing to the GEDP's Newsletter to make sure that Tech Clinic's future community events are properly advertised

## **Challenges and lessons**

One of the greatest challenges we had to overcome this semester was a lack of attendance at the community meetings that we organized. Instead of becoming discouraged, we used this feedback in order to strengthen our approach for the rest of our project and for the next four years. The lack of attendance at our meetings encouraged us to reform our all-encompassing approach to the West Ward so that the next phases of the project will focus on various blocks. We believe that the block approach will increase efficiency and will aid the future Technology Clinic groups in adequately communicating with the community. The close-knit relationships that are anticipated to form will aid in solidifying trust capital among the West Ward residents and the Technology Clinic.

Since our phase of the five-year project is determinative of the objectives of the four subsequent years, we struggled to narrow down the agenda that the next Technology Clinic groups would utilize. We diverted from solidifying plans for the next four years, specifically because we know that the West Ward will change significantly, as will their needs. We have focused our attention on perfecting our framework and paradigm so that the next Technology Clinics have a solid understanding of the purpose of our project and the methodological approach they should be taking. The future Technology Clinics will use our block analysis as a guideline for their work with the West Ward community.

Building on last semester's work proved difficult because we had not researched or developed on enough scholarship. We realized this shortcoming of last semester and took the initiative to search and read various economic scholarship articles throughout this semester. The scholarship we selected has aided us in improving our understanding of sustainable community development and has influenced our decision to refine our approach.

# Our Support

## **Community Acknowledgments**

***As our segment of the project comes to an end, we would like to thank everyone who met with us and spoke with us about the West Ward. Your contributions are invaluable, and our final report is reflective of the meetings and conversations we had. We would like to give a special shout out to the people listed below, whose support and time has immensely helped us throughout the past two semesters.***

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## Scholarship

**Beck, Barbra, Gail Newton, and Cheryl Maurana. 2002. "Lessons in Community Building: From Dialogue to Action." *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 7 (3): 27–40.**

Using the Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Turning Ideas Into Action model, this article chronicles the benefits and challenges using community building to empower underserved communities. The article specifically focuses on low income public housing communities and is geared towards informing a community-academic partnership with the philosophy of “doing with instead of doing for or doing to”. The Neighbors program has two parts. The first part is a community dialogue, which brings the residents together to discuss community assets, concerns, and ideas for improvement with the end goal of identifying common themes. The second part is a Community Action Fund which provides members with a grant to improve their community and quality of life. This type of program is extremely close the approach the West Ward project has taken. The model aims to build dialogue and facilitate community ownership through asset defining and collective problem solving. Also like our project, this program uses academic partnerships as anchors. The only main point of disagreement is the use of a grant program, which would essentially nullify community agency and sustainability, because the anchor institutions and government then become the sole determiners of who and which projects “deserve” funding. But ultimately the use of community meetings is shown to provide a forum for the community and was able to bring diverse groups of residents together.

**Berube, Alan. "Policy to help people and help places is not a zero-sum game." *Brookings Institute* (August 7, 2019).**

Alan Berube is a Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institute and writes in this piece about the need to rethink the municipal development maxim “place doesn’t really matter.” He backs up this assertion with three main points: long-term trends of disparity between cities (certain cities, especially when evaluating the tech sector, have soared above others), trends concerning the persistence of poverty (specific locations are exponentiating the disadvantages inferred upon those below the poverty line), and high levels of racial segregation in many urban areas (especially the consequences for black communities which include lack of employment and education opportunities as well as the inability to accumulate wealth). Several examples of place-based policies are offered: improve transportation options, subsidize the renovation of residential buildings in distressed areas, invest directly in enterprises in lower-income areas (and he specifically points to OPPORTUNITY ZONES), funding for schools serving high-poverty student populations, subsidize lead paint remediation in low-income neighborhoods to improve childhood health and education outcomes, or follow the “Purpose Built

Communities” model ([www.purposebuiltcommunities.org](http://www.purposebuiltcommunities.org)). Four barriers he identifies are: time, financing, permanence, and values. This piece is useful to our project because it identifies historically trends affecting areas similar to the West Ward, offers a plethora of well supported policies, and considers potential stumbling blocks to those attempting to pursue said policies.

**Florida, Richard L. 2017. “Winner-Take-All Urbanism.” In *The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class-- and What We Can Do about It*, 13–33. New York: Basic Books.**

Richard Florida’s chapter explains the concept of “Winner-Take-All Urbanism” or the trend in which America’s richest cities keep getting richer. Within that trend, on the individual level, the gap between the income of persons with college and graduate degrees will continue to grow. Ultimately, this form of urbanism contributes to the growing gap between the rich and the poor. In the past cities have been spaces of economic mobility for persons of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Winner-take-all urbanism indicates the end of this norm. This may indicate that mid-sized cities like Easton will be well-posed to pick up the economic clout of large richer cities. The mid-sized can become a new steppingstone for people to move out of poverty. Cities like Easton can take advantage of this opportunity by empowering their communities that are transient and would normally move to a larger city for opportunity.

**Hoxie, Christina, Robert Berkebile, and Joel Ann Todd. 2011. “Stimulating Regenerative Development through Community Dialogue.” *Building Research and Information*, 40 (1): 65–80.**

This journal article is specifically focused on the use of community dialogue in the context of regenerative development. Regenerative development focuses on the creation and uniqueness of “place”, of which community engagement plays a central role. The authors argue a community-centric approach to defining place ensures shared goals and sustainability. Despite the fact that regenerative development is aimed at environmental sustainability projects, the use of an “eco-charrette” to foster dialogue within the community and between the community and officials, is applicable to any discussion topic of community interest. The only downside of their approach is that it is unclear whether the community is playing the role of the initiator in the regenerative development projects, or if developers and urban planners are defining the projects. If it is the latter than the community and the community has determines that regenerative development is a priority, then the use of charrettes paired with dialogue is creating an empowered community with the ownership to build on the projects. However, if it is the former than the process cannot claim to give agency to the communities or create trust.

**Lukasiewicz, Karolina, Bahar, Ozge Sensoy, Ali, Samira, Gopalan, Priya, Parker, Gary, Hawkins, Robert, McKay, Mary, & Walker, Robert. "Getting by in New York City: Bonding, Bridging and Linking Capital in Poverty-Impacted Neighborhoods." *City & Community*, 18, no. 1 (2019).**

This article reflects on the structural deficits that prohibit bonding, bridging and linking capital in urban neighborhoods. This case focuses on the integration of two urban neighborhoods and how the lack of resources, safety and homogeneity hinder true networking of community members. This article is helpful for us to understand the causes of any friction as we navigate the planning of community meetings and exploration of community bonding.

**Mansuri, Ghazala, and Vijayendra Rao. 2004. "Community-Based and -Driven Development: A Critical Review." *The World Bank Research Observer*, 19 (1): 1-39.**

This article echoes the benefits of projects which leave decision making to the community stakeholders. They argue this approach reverses power dynamics and promotes agency for marginalized communities that normally are given no voice. The article reviews the effects from World Bank cases studies in the areas of participatory development, community and social capital, public service distribution. This article is relevant due to its insights on how community cohesion and social capital improve the quality and sustainability of projects. Yet the article also contends that more community participation does not solve collective action problems. In order to solve these problems, they recommend institutional guidance and external agents who can facilitate collective action. An additional important note is made about the process of community-driven development is very conditional to the cultural and social environment, which raises questions over whether this process can be balanced between a standard process or must be case by case due to the unique aspects of every community.

**Newman, Lenore and Ann Dale. "The Role of Agency in Sustainable Local Community Development." *Local Environment*, October 2005, vol. 10, no. 5: 477-486.**

This article centralized around the positives and negatives to social capital and the ways in which social capital impacts a community's ability to develop. This article explores the difference in 'bonding' social capital and in 'bridging' social capital; bonding refers to the reinforcement of homogeneous groups and thoughts, while bridging refers to connecting different social networks together though they may be weakly connected. While social capital is necessary to community development, this article supports that agency must always come first. Agency is the key connector between a community and their ability to organically create sustainable solutions. It

is essential that actors are aware of the agency they possess, both on an individual and group level. Once the need for agency is established, it is discussed how practicing agency can either be inhibited or enhanced by social capital bonding and bridging. This article is essential to our entire mission. It explores the necessity for agency and the process of building social capital. There are also great quotes in this article that could potentially be used in our final report to back our fundamental beliefs.

**Reynolds, Tracey. "Family and Community Networks in the Re(Making) of Ethnic Identity of Caribbean Young People in Britain." Routledge, August 2006, vol. 9, no. 3:273-290.**

This article consists of evaluations of the development of community networks within the Caribbean population in Great Britain. For these Caribbean people, they utilized social networks to reaffirm their cultural and ethnic identities and belonging. This was done through direct participation in agencies within their community and through the maintenance of local and transnational social networks. The construction of social capital within this specific community allowed the sharing of resources and additional social networks. The authors focus this sense of community and social capital on the basis that the Caribbean population has largely been marginalized and excluded within the greater Great Britain population. I feel that this article can be useful when examining the development of social capital and networks within the West Ward, specifically what prompts certain relationships to form within certain groups of people. When organizing a community bonding activity, it would be useful to consider what social networks will be most comfortable with one another, but also the drawbacks of confining conversation within separate groups of people.

**Sibeon, Roger. 2002. "Agency, Structure, and Social Change as Cross-Disciplinary Concepts." *Politics*, 19 (3): 139-44.**

This article explores the interconnectedness of agency, structure, and social change, while also defining each concept to make them distinct from one another. It has been argued widely whether agency creates structure and the social world or if structure creates individuals who possess the agency to make autonomous decisions. It is believed that agency and structure are intertwined, creating the 'duality of structure' which "melds agency and structure into one, instead of regarding them as dualism that consists of two separable, albeit connected, phenomena" (139). Duality includes the actor's ability to reproduce social structures, while dualism is when actors purposely separate themselves from structures. This article also provides helpful definitions of each of the key terms. Agency is utilized as "capacity to act upon situations is an attribute of actors (or agents)." with actors referring to "an entity that, in principle, has the means of formulating and acting upon decisions" (140-141). Actors are able and expected to take accountability for their decisions, and those who are considered actors are individual people and social actors

(organizations like committees). Society and the state are NOT considered actors because they ““have no identifiable means of taking decisions”” (141). Instead, they are comprised of actors. The importance of social structures is that “actors are influenced, constrained, or enabled by” them (141). It is crucial to consider structure as related to agency opposed to versus agency. Social chance appears as either accidental coming together of events/sequence of events or as unforeseen consequences of previous actions.

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